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WHY TOUGH ISN'T ENOUGH

The new PM and his crew should be on a roll. So why are they picking on people?

AMONG THE BEST hockey players whom I grew up, the operating rule was that the tougher they were, the less likely they were to bang. They didn't look for fights, nor did they duck them. When they were—as they did, often—they rarely talked about it. The rule was too true: the guys who talked the most excitedly about fighting—and boasted about who won on their hit list—seldom lived up to their claims. Later in life, I saw how

those characteristics carried over into adulthood. Talk to military people who have served in dangerous places, for example, and they tend to downplay their contribution and play up the efforts of others. By contrast, too many people around Bay Street who make their living pushing other people's money around talk as if they're mowing off to see every day that they "kill or fill" an order, or observe closely that "you don't kill, you don't eat," and so on. Hard to say who they're impressing, other than each other—but perhaps that's the point.

Similarly, one problem around Ottawa is that too many of Paul Martin's people toughness as an end, rather than a means, and that's dangerous for a while. The PM himself doesn't usually have that problem; his furious-or-reluctant temper usually vanishes as quickly as it appears, and he's not otherwise a weak caller. Except, as John Golden notes (page 16), in the case of NDP Leader Jack Layton, who makes the PM near apologetic with his allusion to Martin as a special gallant on a touch with ordinary Canadians.

As a result, Martin spends an inordinate amount of time—given the NDP's 14 seats in the House of Commons—responding to Layton. The result isn't what's intended: Martin is doing Layton a favour by giving him more attention than he should. And when you lump those exchanges with Layton in with some other recent behaviour by the Martin people, you get the sense they're awfully bothered by things like the elimination of exercises at any cost and the belief that loyalty should trump any and all other values. Consider the case of Sheila Copps, who, at the least, isn't ruling out the idea of jumping from the Liberals to the NDP. That's a possibility if it doesn't become

“Too many of Paul Martin's followers see toughness as an end, rather than a means, and that's a recipe for trouble.”

concern about Copps' thoroughness career, it's her loyalty to the Liberals. But now she's saying that "backroom boys" seem intent on pushing her out before the next election. That treatment of Copps and economic ministers in Layton are bad politics—especially since Martin won the Liberals' greatest challenge: will come from the left in the next election. It's also disturbing because this is a point at which the PM and his people should be feeling self-confident—and magnanimous. After all, they're finally in power, still in their honeymoon period, there are no pressing national problems, and there's little doubt they'll get a new mandate in the next election.

But couple that recent behaviour with the exile from Martin's inner cabinet of virtually all ministers considered too close to Jean Chrétien, and the overall should be troubling to anyone who checks qualities such as competence and coalition building should remain at least as much as loyalty. For proof, just ask where Martin would be if Chrétien hadn't understood that when he was looking for a finance minister in 1993.

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MACLEAN'S BEHIND THE SCENES



CANADIAN FIRSTS

For the first time in a long time, Canadian cities are on the public-policy agenda. Yet how does a national magazine like Maclean's meet the challenge of covering a story that is so local?

Last week's issue as cities presented one solution that was also a first for Maclean's: we published five different regional covers, each featuring innovative mayors (Halifax's Peter Kelly, Montreal's Gérald Tremblay, Toronto's David Miller, Winnipeg's Glen Murray and Larry Campbell of Vancouver). "City politics now attracts arguably the most dynamic political thinkers in Canada," says Editor Anthony Wilson-Smith. "In fact, we could have chosen many other mayors if timing and logistics had permitted."

This is not the first time Maclean's has experimented with covers. On at least two previous occasions the magazine has featured different front and back covers, prompting some readers to display both. In 1985, it was Timesam Square and the opening of SkyDome. In 2003, it was the Maclean's Honour Roll and Canadian Food. (Fortunately, we had no reports of consumers who mistakenly purchased one of each in the belief that they were different magazines.)

We've also published "gatefold," or pull-out covers, most recently in the advertising free issue following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in 2001.

Maclean's continues to look for new ways of providing interest and value to readers. Expect more innovation in the near future.

If you missed last week's Cities cover package, you can still view it by visiting www.macleans.ca/city-stories

For further information about this article, contact: behindthescenes@macleans.ca.

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Mary Janigan | ON THE ISSUES



NO TIME FOR WAITING

Ottawa has to start spending soon to stave off a crisis in the country's armed forces

THESE IS probably no area where Paul Martin's problems are more pressing than defence. Neglected for years, our armed forces are now an unsettling reminder of how much the world has changed—and how they have not. The military's task, among documents, the 1994 White Paper, a public-consultation process that we can rely on now that the Cold War is over. Elderly equipment is approaching the age when even repairs are unfeasible. Operating capacity is strained to the limit. And although no one knows the final bill for our one-year post-9/11 mission in Afghanistan—it ends this summer—it has almost certainly pushed the department over its \$13.1-billion budget for 2005-2006. "Canada is headed for a long period when governments will be without effective military resources, even for domestic defence and national surveillance," warns a recent report from the Queen's University School of Policy Studies.

In other words, defence is a mess. Last month, Martin asked Foreign Affairs to lead other departments in the creation of a policy framework for diplomacy, development, trade—and defence. The PM himself will chair a new global affairs cabinet committee. He knows what he wants: the capacity to allow Canada to back as foreign policy with military force.

But change takes time—especially because Martin has reorganized departments. That has drenched the bureaucrats into a tizzy as they struggle to figure out their new responsibilities. And it has slowed the development of the foreign policy framework, as Ottawa juggles, officials have held only preliminary talks about

future talks. But they hope to have a plan for a parliamentary committee to examine this fall. Meanwhile, Treasury Board is scrutinizing every department's spending, including Defence, looking for savings. There are forecasts ahead. Early last year, Defence vowed to find \$200 million in external savings. It failed. This time, his boss says, no savings are away with that. Cutting will likely occur in the top-heavy administrative sector which, remarkably, costs up almost half of the military's annual spending. Extra funds, perhaps \$1 billion, could be borrowed from other departments. "We have to see if there is some way to produce more people in operational units than we do now," says Douglas Bland, editor of the recent report, and chair of the Queen's defence management studies program. "But defence has been neglected for so long that we must add more money to take care of the future force."

Meanwhile, Canada's role in the world must also be reexamined. Military leaders are trying to estimate almost 3,300 troops from Bosnia—and more than 2,000 from Afghanistan. Then, unless a serious crisis erupts, perhaps in troubled Zimbabwe, military planners are assuming there will be no further pricey missions for 18 months or two years. They will use the time to modernize, start buying new equipment—and rebuild operating capacity that is now estimated to be as low as 10 per cent of the 60,000-person force.

The military needs the break. Bland has compiled the life expectancies of our equipment. Some, such as older members of the Arctic fleet, have already exceeded their expected span. The tab for new and replacement equipment could hit \$18.7 billion over the next five years. Expensive, yes, but the time for change is overdue—if we want to be able to handle crises should we do so.

Mary Janigan is a political and policy writer. mary.janigan@canwestmedia.ca

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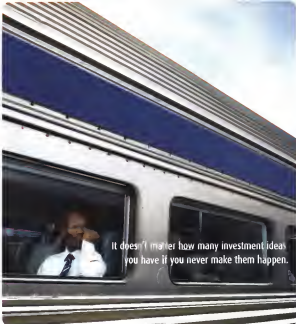
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UPFRONT

WORLD

HIDDLE EAST Israel again closed off the Gaza Strip and resumed its plan to target even Hamas spiritual leaders for assassination after a young Palestinian mother with two urban children blew herself up at a key Gaza checkpoint, killing four Israeli security officers. A signal of a more radical line of attack by the militant Hamas, using women as *suicettes*, the bombing followed a huge demonstration by as many as 100,000 Israelis against the dismantling of any Jewish settlements on the Palestinian West Bank.

HAITI Bowing to international pressures, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide of Haiti pledged to hold long-sought elections within six months. Supporters of the once-popular Aristide are accused of a campaign of terror in which nearly 30 anti-government demonstrators have been killed in recent months.

DISCRETION In a ruling that shocked cosmopolitan Japan, a judge found a comic book obscene because of its no-nonsense depiction of genitalia and sexual acts. Free speech proponents pointed out the huge number of pornographic videos easily available, but the comic book ruling was clearly a test case for that country's most stringent reading material

IMAGINITY Italy's constitutional court tossed out the controversial "Rebutassi law," rushed through in June to grant the Italian prime minister immunity from corruption charges while in office. The decision likely means the resumption of bribery charges, which stem from a 1983 business deal, against the media baron turned politician.

BANKS New York-based JP Morgan Chase & Co. will acquire Chicago's Bank One Corp. in a deal worth roughly US\$68 billion that will make it the second largest U.S. bank. Chase pumped US\$45 billion into two state-owned banks and is to offer a US\$40-billion bailout to a third, partly in preparation for taking at least one of them public. On New York and Hong Kong exchanges.

SEAPORT The U.S. was judging enforcement from 33 leaders, including Canadian Paul Martin, to begin talks on an ambitious



OKA REPLAY Chief Justice Lamer's attempt to void alleged drug rackets from his brother-in-law's estate, void of Montreal's efforts to a spectacular setback. Angry Montrealers, backed Lamer's house and used his 18th birthday and other to hold Heritage 50 celebrities had received from other money. The Quebec government suggested the business and reputation of the judicial committee, but left Lamer's unaffected.

two trade some that would stretch from Alaska to Argentina. An offshore is an attempt by landlocked Bolivia to gain its own seaport from Chile, something the two neighbors fought over over a century ago and is a hot issue in La Paz.

YES-LOVE-YES Unhappy that Britons are forced to be fingerprinted at security associations U.S. customs, a judge has ordered the same for Americans travelling to the U.S. Tourist officials are trying to soften the blow by having young women hand out *Kiss Loves You T-shirts*.

CONDOMS Belgian Cardinal Godfried Danneberg, a possible successor to Pope John Paul II, challenged official doctrine by saying he could accept the use of condoms between partners if one was HIV positive and the contraceptive was used to protect life.

HEALTH | SCIENCE

HIGHFLOW World health officials are trying to contain a new outbreak of a potent strain virus that has killed millions of birds, including chickens, in Vietnam, South Korea and Japan.

GETTING PERSONAL

Martin is under fire for not just what he does, but who he is, writes JOHN GEDDES

PRIME MINISTER Paul Martin is said to be volatile behind closed doors. His layman's proudly unman to having been accused, boasting that he ignores only on the company of those who have crossed his trust of affection. But in public, he usually keeps his cool—with one notable recent exception: he has up, his complexion visibly registering rising anger, when Jack Layton has just given an interview. The NDP leader has just been under Martin's skin by portraying him as a politician of privilege, guilty of looking out for the business interests of his rich pals. In a year-end interview with *Maclean's*, a question about Layton was the only one that pulled Martin out of a relaxed mood. Suddenly upright in his chair, the Prime Minister punctuated his rebuttal by throwing his index finger down onto a tablecloth, as if scolding for the bums that would launch a charged strike on New Democratic Party leadership.

Martin's indignant response was not to defend his policies, but to claim the morals of a man of the people. His polemic flow his father, though a successful Liberal politician, came from a poor family. How he himself made his fortune in business, rather than inheriting it. And, especially, how proud he is of his bond with voters in his Montreal riding, LaSalle-Essard. "Those people elected me every single election since 1988," Martin said. "And they elected me because they knew I was one of them." Now, no matter how much Martin is worth (estimated at \$10 million), that's

quite a claim. The average family income in his electoral district was just under \$55,000 at the time of the 2001 census, about \$13,000 below the national average. Martin is, as they know, a millionaire. Many more are not.

But does that guilt between his experience and the duty reality of most Canadians' lives matter? The fact that Layton sees no in being a very tender nerve suggests that, at least in partisan good-will, it does. And, last week, the temptation to take aim at Martin's wealth and upbringing helped across ideological lines a Stephen Harper, in

Canadians into those five seconds in a comprehension of trade relations to the Prime Minister's well-known biography. Martin might present his story that way: son of a socially progressive Liberalism, self-made businessman, with an average guy's taste for premium market food. Harper spurs the same, from like that other spoon insider, made his money on these connections, and as a result can't relate to ordinary Canadians' financial concerns. Also, Harper orders ground to no man in his regard for safety, thereby prodigal justice.

Playing with a personal edge on politics can be off-putting, but it sure generates buzz. Layton has attracted more attention than any NDP leader of recent vintage with the line of attack. His much-discussed Web site, *flyaway.ca*, is a both-world attacking Martin for representing vessels in his ship-ping empire under foreign "flags of convenience." That's standard shipping industry practice, but isn't how Layton's son presents it? "Wag, while Paul Martin was finance minister, his brother happened and forced Canada to pay the GST and raised the gas tax. But while he was a corporate lawyer, he hosted other countries' flags on his ships and got out of paying Canadian taxes."

That's a strong charge on itself. How did Dean's biography contribute to the U.S. Democratic presidential nomination. His surprising dash to the front of the pack was led started by his gutsy anti-trust war move, but was sustained by assaults on George W. Bush



as a pillar of every capitalist. It's not hard to see how Bush and Martin might be similarly vulnerable to this sort of assault. Both are sons of powerful politicians who made big money in business before taking the electoral plunge themselves. That's a crude parallel, but as versus their populism, it's not on sobriety. It can be a little cruder, though, when a credible link is made between the circles a politician moves in and the policies he guarantees toward. Dean's first dual link, among other places, in Bush's tax cuts for the well-off. Layton makes much

of Martin pushing ahead with a business tax reduction this year despite a federal spending crunch.

Up to now, Dean's rising example has been an enticing cue for Canadian opposition strategists. His limitations, though, may prove to be cautionary. Critics contend that he has galvanized a noisy minority without showing how he might broaden his appeal. Inside the Democratic primary process, his hard hitting rhetoric is peccat. Out in the wider world of a presidential election, worried mainstream Democrats

fear Bush will crush him. Canada's premier, Gordon Brown, president of Congress Inc., makes this cross-border comparison: "Like Dean, Layton has his greatest influence on left-wing activists, and like Dean, he won't have a great influence on the wider electorate."

Maybe that doesn't matter much to Layton. If Dean gets the nomination, after all, he will have to actually defeat Bush—a U.S. presidential election is a winner take all affair. But nobody expects Layton to become Martin's own challenger in the NDP's policy 34 MPs now sitting in the House would be victory enough. That motivated an objective demands left-of-center base-building, not competing for middle-of-the-road votes. Layton has realized there is no room in the centre for the NDP, says Dalhousie University history professor Todd McCulloch, as open on left rights in Canadian politics. "He's not appealing to the average Canadian or middle-class's rallying his own troops."

Harper, too, might be picking up on Martin's message to shore up core support: that old Reform party anti-establishment vote. Like Layton, and unlike Dean, he doesn't need to be the country's most popular leader just yet, only to win a leadership race, and then enough seats to make the new Conservatives responsible.

Looked at this way, the fierce tone Dean has injected into the U.S. political debate might be expected to make as much of a general vote as the Democratic success. In Canada, though, the edge on the attack that Layton and now Harper have unleashed from opposite ends of the ideological spectrum might only sharpen in the run-up to the expected spring election. In which case, when Parliament resumes sitting next month, worth for Martin to get plenty of practice at trying to hold his own in a tough campaign.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Forget the usual suspects. In B.C., regular folks are tackling electoral reform, writes PAUL WELLS.

IT'S SOMETIMES SAID that democracy makes it possible for ordinary people to do extraordinary things. It's so ridiculous said that any one of us can make a difference. But be honest. How often do you see it happening?

Actually, it's happening right now in British Columbia.

On Jan. 10 and 11, the floor of change gathered in a downtown Vancouver conference hall, and it could not more completely resemble the face of your neighbour, because that's precisely what it is.

The 150 members of the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform will spend most of the year trying to find an improvement on the way governments get elected in B.C. The group's power is remarkable. If a majority of the members decide next autumn that a new system should be implemented, their choice will be put to a referendum in the next provincial election in May 2009. Premier Gordon Campbell cannot stop that vote even if he wants to.

British Columbians are trying to fix the sort of quirk that befuddled Campbell (above).



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The Citizens' Assembly—which gathered 140 people from throughout British Columbia—represents “a new tool in social democracy.”

although his B.C. Liberals are some of their overwhelming majority to the quotas of the current system.

But the citizens who have been entrusted with this power are not hand-picked academics, washed-up party hacks or well-connected friends of the regime. They were selected through a series of random draws one man and one woman from each of B.C.'s 79 provincial ridings, plus two Aboriginal representatives who were added after random selection failed to turn up anyone from the First Nations.

One of those guarantors of democratic reform is a dog walker from North Vancouver. Another manages the sporting goods department at the Kelowna Wal-Mart. There is a third-year student at the University of British Columbia and a man who operates a pet cemetery.

“The decision is that non-elected citizens have the power to make this decision,” Jack

Blaney, a former president of Simon Fraser University who is the assembly's appointed chairman, said in an interview. “We are envisioning a new social tool in democracy.”

To watch the citizen-reformers work on the first weekend of their long year was to witness a stirring rebuttal to the cynicism that

TO watch the citizen-reformers work was to watch a stirring rebuttal to the cynicism that infests Canadian politics

infests so much of Canadian politics and political journalism.

The participants listened eagerly at Ketchikan, a political science professor at the University of British Columbia, began the long process of explaining how other coun-

tries elect their leaders. They discussed the options at length in smaller breakout sessions. The discussion attracted were mutual respect and a willingness to question their own assumptions.

“I’ve never seen such enthusiasm and knowledge from a group of people that they’re doing something novel and useful,” Ken McKinnon, the director of Yukon College, said near the end of the assembly’s first day.

McKinnon’s presence in Vancouver is another part of this story. Because, while the power of ordinary people in the B.C. Citizens’ Assembly is unique, serious electoral reform is being considered in more than half of the country. The governments of Ontario and Quebec have in recent months announced reforms. McKinnon was in Vancouver to take notes as the Yukon’s senior adviser on electoral reform. New Brunswick doesn’t see an observer because Bernard Lord, the

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Elections | >

province's premier, has created his own commission on reform of elections and the legislature. Last month, Norman Cameron, Prince Edward Island's retired chief justice, submitted a report recommending a dose of proportionality so smaller parties will no longer be swamped by winning parties in elections.

Only a few years ago, electoral reform was a dead issue, dismissed by opposition parties but dismissed by the parties that benefit from the current system and were, human nature being what it is, loath to abandon that edge. What changed? "Well, we have evolved our electoral practices over time," said Bill Gross, research director for New Brunswick's Commission on Legislative Democracy. "Just look at the franchise, right? I mean, women couldn't vote. Up until the 1960s, Native Canadians couldn't vote. We lowered the voting age in the 1970s."

Recent events have led many Canadians to suspect the system is due for another major tweak. "What's happening in the

provinces listening to Carty and experts from abroad tell them about other systems.

Those include proportional representation, in which a party that wins 30 per cent of the vote gets 30 per cent of a legislature's seats, France's two-round voting system, in which the top two or three candidates face a second "runoff" election, and all manner of list, "transferable vote" and run-and-match compromises.

Carty calls it the most challenging course he's ever given because his audience is so diverse and he is so leery of handing them toward any particular outcome. "We've got people here who are keenly interested in politics—and people who really aren't sure what the legislature is," he said. "How do you talk to those people without talking down or being simplistic?"

As for the challenge of teaching without imposing, Carty's answer is to spend much of his time simply asking questions. Is necessary for a member of a legislature to represent a specific chunk of territory any more? What

does a gain in votes through a proportional system, and what do you lose in government stability by abolishing the rules most Canadians are used to?

Every political pundit has favorite answers to questions like this.



"WE have evolved our electoral process over time. Just look at the franchise. We lowered the voting age in the 1970s."

Gross is concerned that non-voters are disproportionately young

federal level, with Paul Martin talking about the democratic deficit, got people's attention," Gross said. "The deficit in turnout is a substantial ingredient. In New Brunswick we've gone down from 70 to 60 per cent in recent elections." And the growing legions of non-voters, Gross said, are disproportionately young. "That's a real concern."

There is no guarantee the various reform movements will reach the same conclusion. In fact, it's far better they disagree. That's fine, Gross said. "I think it's a great opportunity for Canadians to have different experiences, if you will, and we can try different systems."

Deciding how to fix British Columbia's system, whether to let B.C. assembly members spend part of their first weekend around neighborhoods they don't have to recommend a change if they can't find a single better way—begins with a steep learning curve. The citizens' reformers will spend a total of

but anyone would have been impressed with the assembly participants' willingness to question any system's shortcomings. Harley Nyren, the Wal-Mart employee from Kelowna, belonged to a breakout group whose members come from the far corner of British Columbia and are convinced they can only be represented by somebody from the local community. He reported back to his colleagues that he was amazed to hear from another group whose members are mostly Vancouverites—and who don't think "regional representivity" is important at all.

The citizens' reformers pressed every such contradiction, not to mention but to a challenge and an opportunity. "I thought I was one of those average individuals who thought politics and our electoral system were important, right?" Nyren said. "But 150 other people are probing me wrong. Maybe I'm not wasting my time, you know?"

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MACLEAN'S



tainted food

Is there anything that's really safe to eat? That depends on what lurks in your fridge, DANYLO HAWALESHKA writes.

FROZEN ORGANIC beef hamburger patties, \$9.78/kg. Grade No. 1 organic onions, \$2.26. On the vine, hothouse organic tomatoes, \$11/kg. Eating a hamburger that doesn't load you down with chemicals, priceless. Well, maybe. Some shoppers would just say pricey. Those organic ingredients—when compared to the common ones regrettably seasoned with traces of antibiotics, growth hormones and pesticides—can cost anywhere from 15 to 170 per cent more. But let's come to this, hasn't it? Most Canadians would never accept a two-tiered health-care system, yet that's the direction in which we seem to be heading with our food. Consumers who are at least reasonably well-off can afford the good stuff, while those who are financially strapped make do. As shown by the scores with mad cow disease and tainted farmed salmon, our increasingly industrialized food



Anxiety in the icebox

Common food items may contain harmful and/or controversial substances (all animals are widely federally regulated unless noted)

1. Beef rib roast
antibiotics, hormones, pesticides
2. Milk
pesticides
3. Chicken
antibiotics, dioxins
4. Ham
nitrates
5. Bell peppers
pesticides
6. Grapes
pesticides
7. Cantaloupe
pesticides
8. Cucumbers
pesticides
9. Farmed salmon
chlorine, PCBs
10. Muffins baked with margarine
trans fats
11. Bacon
nitrates and nitrites
12. Eggs
dioxins
13. Black Forest cake with maraschino cherries
trans fats, red synthetic dye
14. Stuffed olives
red synthetic dye

chain may turn out to be the pitfall that keeps us from what could otherwise be a long, healthy life.

In the early 1960s, secular author Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* brought to light the horrendous unsanitary conditions in Chicago slaughterhouses and packing plants. He described the cramped, dark meat rooms with their open vats. Because some of the vat openings were almost level with the shop floor, workers sometimes slipped and fell in. Occasionally, before anyone noticed, the unfortunate soul's remains would re-emerge days later—packaged as DuSoy's Pure Leaf Lard. In writing his book, Sinclair wanted to draw attention to the inhumane work conditions under which Americans labored. Instead, the U.S. public and its legislators were so shocked that Congress passed the federal Pure Food and Drug and Meat Inspection Act in 1906. Later, Sinclair famously remarked: "I aimed at the public's heart and by accident I hit it in the stomach."

What we're seeing in the news today amounts to a similar blow to the gut. While we've dealt with those century-old problems in our abundance, we now have new ones to contend with, and they go well beyond the North American road cow cases in the past year. The recent study on farmed Atlantic salmon published in the *Journal of Senior Food* found high levels of PCBs, dioxins, BDT and other toxic substances linked to increased risks of cancer and birth defects. Yet this is only one element of a larger problem with food production. In industrial farming and widespread pollution, critics argue, are the



real culprit today. We must rethink how we put food on our tables.

Genetically modified crops, such as corn, soybeans, and wheat, are being grown by the hundreds and thousands, necessitating the use of potent herbicides that we end up swallowing. Studies suggest these ingested drugs can increase the risk of harmful bacteria in humans developing antibiotic resistance. Growth hormones pumped into cattle raise concerns over disruption of our own hormone systems. Our fish, vegetables, meat and milk are found to contain toxic pesticides in trace amounts. Processed meats are preserved with nitrates and nitrites that guard against the bacterial growth that causes botulism, but have been linked to cancer. Trans fatty acids in margarine, shortening, fast foods and convenience bakery products increase the risk of heart disease. There are worries about genetically modified food and the increasing push by industry to eradicate meat to stimulate it.

It used to be that if you wanted to eat healthy, you'd eat fish. Now, we have to consider whether seafood might not be better consid-

The dirty dozen

According to the Sierra Club, if you can afford to buy only some organic products, you should focus on the following fruits and vegetables—especially if you're serving them to children. Typically, these items are heavily sprayed with pesticides.

apricots
asparagus
bell peppers
cantaloupes
cherries
cucumbers
grapes
green beans
lettuce
potatoes
spinach
tomatoes

ered as potential biohazard. Consider that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration warns pregnant women, nursing mothers and small children against eating tuna and shellfish on a regular basis. There's too much mercury in them. Health Canada says it sets strict limits on the toxins allowed in the fish we eat, and in conjunction with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, reminds that "contaminated farmed salmon does not pose a health risk to consumers." Others aren't so sure. "The Canadian government says that aquaculture will have the safest and best food in the world," notes Herb Barbolet, founder of the Farmed Fish Campaign. Society, a non-profit organization in Vancouver concerned with food, farming, health and the environment. "I think on the whole that's probably accurate, but the problems in the food system, nonetheless, are enormous."

Even the water we drink can be tainted in countless ways. Pesticides, industrial chemicals and micro-organisms constantly have to be monitored and kept at bay. Scientists worry about chemical pharmaceutical drugs in the water we drink. Bottled water—the guidelines are outdated—is often no more than flavored tap water. (Health Canada has undertaken a review and expects to toughen rules on, for example, aesthetic levels.)

Karen Dodd, director general of Health Canada's health products and food branch, stands by the quality of our food safety system. She disputes the need to restrict consumption of farmed salmon, as the Science paper recommends. "Levels found in the study were well below our guidelines," notes Dodd. "There is no reason for concern."

What can the consumer do? Andrea Peart, the Ottawa-based director of the health and environment program for the Sierra Club of Canada, says buying organic foods is a start, but not the ultimate answer. "Above all else," counsels Peart, "buy local, whether it's a pig or a tomato." That supports often hard-pressed farmers and helps decentralize food production, she adds. The fruits and vegetables tend to have less pesticide residue, too. "A lot of additional chemicals are applied just to ship products to stay fresh," she notes. "Immediately, by buying from farmers close to home, that's cut out of the equation." Other food safety options: buy meat products that are raised without antibiotics and growth hormones, and cook as much as you can.

Cooking a meal from scratch once in a

while, if not regularly, is another not-so-revolutionary activity that many families have strayed from. The food is better than, say, packaged lasagna, whose meat could be the very last and worst scraps taken off the bone. The tomato sauce may be sautéed with meat fat, and the cheese is perhaps from factory-farmed animals and thus could contain growth hormones.

Janet Nicol, a high school teacher in Toronto, has been buying organic products for a decade. When times are tough, she says, she makes the meat, but she's a convert to knowing she's on top of the situation and that she and her three children—Emmett, 8, and 16-week-old twins Austin and Myles—are safe. At the same time, the science report caused some concern. "Because the cost of wild fish is so high, her family can't afford to eat salmon about once a month. Still, Nicol, 38, has taken a wait-and-see approach. "I don't tend to immediately stop just because there's been an report. It's something to follow." She encourages friends to opt for organic whenever possible, but wonders if her own family can maintain its current degree of conscientiousness. "Prices are going down," observes Nicol, "but frankly, I'm going to have three growing boys. We're going to have to cut back on our consumption because it's so much more expensive."

In general, North Americans aren't exactly eager to march for their wallets at the checkout counter. "We spend less than 10 per cent of our disposable income on food," notes Barbolet. "That's the

Nicol, with Austin and Myles, worries about being able to afford organic foods as her kids get bigger.

least that my place in the world spends on food. Because of this, we're getting, basically, fat, salt and sugar—the things that are cheap." If, for example, overweight people needed any more convincing, yet another study earlier this month pointed to obesity as a killer. Published in the *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, the study shows that one in 10 deaths in people aged 10 to 64 years can be blamed on excess weight. Unfortunately, good food costs money, but at least holds out the lure of better health.

After decades of urban sprawl and loss of farmland, can we reverse the trend? Says Tom Manley, chairman of the Canadian Organic Growers' Ottawa chapter, thinks so can. Instead of independent farmers selling their grain to distant, industrialized livestock operations as they do today, Manley says farmers could raise and feed their own cattle. "The increase in production in the last 40 years," says Manley, "has largely been done with genetics, breeding and selecting plants and animals to produce



meat per unit of space or time." Currently, large- and pesticide-free production lags behind factory farming. Masley adds, but "because more organic farmers are still learning their trade." But if you compare export-oriented, midsize organic farms to conventional farms, it's a similar conversation." Masley says, "you'll get very comparable results, if not better."

Austin, Tex.-based Whole Foods Market is the world's largest retailer of natural and organic foods. It has 149 stores in North America, including a single Canadian outlet that opened in Toronto in 2002. Another in the area is in the final stages of planning, and a third is set to open in Vancouver by next September. The success of Whole Foods—a single store with 19 employees opened in 1980—shows just how popular eating well has become, at least in a significant subset of the population. "Everything in the store is at least 'natural,' and does as try to offer an organic option wherever possible," says Stefania Arca, the chain's Toronto-based spokeswoman. By natural, Arca means free of any artificial colors, flavors, preservatives and sweeteners. The company is selective about the salmon it offers. "First of all, there's PCBs in everything," says Arca, "which the average person doesn't necessarily know." The chain's farmed salmon, she adds, was tested by a private laboratory and showed 340 times less dioxin and over 1,000 times less PCBs than wild salmon.

A BRAVE NEW WORLD of food production awaits us. In 2009, Kraft Foods helped create a heavy-hitting research consortium called Nanotech, a play on the word nano technology, the science of manipulating atoms and molecules to do our bidding. The mission: Kraft wants to learn how nanoparticles can improve flavor. Some of the thinking goes on there—we're talking food that changes color, flavor and cooking value to suit a person's health or palate. We're talking filters to remove toxins. We're even talking packaging that can detect whether food has gone bad. But are we talking mad-scientist, or progress? Who can say with certainty? Farming will have always been about making a balanced diet. Increasingly, however, it also means balancing commerce and tradition, and finding ways to produce food without polluting it.

WILL BRUN RICHARD and SUE PERSSON

Trouble on the fish farm

A food inspection agency considers new regulations to reduce the PCB levels found in processed feed

ST. GEORGE, N.B.—The collapse of New Brunswick's \$230-million salmon growing industry—was taking it to the chin even before the recent dioxin report. Slumping fish prices, a soaring Canadian dollar and the fact that millions of fish had to be killed to control the spread of disease had recently forced some local operators into bankruptcy. Others were struggling.

Things couldn't get any worse, could they? Well, how about a study that concluded farmed Atlantic salmon has 18 times more toxins than its wild Pacific relatives. The chemicals are linked to cancer, birth defects and stunted intelligence. Now this small village near the Bay of Fundy—like so many other rural communities on the East Coast—wonders whether it has lost its reason for life. "Without

this industry," says Harvey Goss, president of St. George-based Canis Aquaculture Products, which sells salmon farming gear to operators on Canada's West and East Coasts as well as in Chile, "this town is sunk."

Nobody's starting the federal march just yet. A legion of experts dismissed the study, which appeared in the prestigious U.S. journal *Science*, as nonsense. Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency find off a press release saying BNF's no need for Canadians to limit themselves to a meal of farmed salmon every six to two months, as the researchers suggest. In the wake of the study, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration actually encouraged people to eat more of the pink-fleshed fish, an important source of omega-3 fatty acids, which reduce the threat

of heart disease. "We're confident the consumer is wise," stresses David Folwell, executive director of the Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance. "They're going to sit down and digest everything and realize that we've got a good product that's good for their health."

Winning the spin war may be near impossible for a \$700-million industry lacking the deep pockets to mount an ad offensive. We're the one lunched by the cattle sector. All the same, fish farmers are acutely aware of one of the report's major conclusions: that most of the contaminants came from the processed feed used in fish farms, which has made farmed fish caught at sea.

Canada doesn't have a regulatory standard for PCBs or other compounds in fish meal, although the CFIA is considering one. At least 100,000 fish meal accounts industry-wide for only about 30 percent of farmed Atlantic feed, with protein levels based on vegetables making up the rest. But switching more heavily toward plant-based feeds would help bring the bad press. "We feed fish we make huge strides," notes Neil Hesse, general manager of the New



It isn't yet possible to estimate the fallout from the farmed-fish scare.

Brunswick Salmon Growers Association. "But we know it's in our best interests to go even further."

So far, it's impossible to estimate the fallout from the report. In places like St. George they're holding their breath. Almost 2,800 people from the St. George area make their living in the mostly salmon-related Aquaculture Industry. And they know a food scare could make their livelihoods disappear. JAMES DUNN



Some studies warn against the use of hormones and antibiotics in the production of beef.

Doubting our prime cuts

Concerns focus on mad cow and more

NOTHING QUITE LIKE Irish kids like the suggestion that tucking into a mouth-watering bit of Alberta beef might lead to the onset of an almost always fatal brain-wasting disease. So when foreign export markets slammed shut following the discovery that May of an Alberta cow with bovine spongiform encephalopathy, otherwise known as mad cow disease, Klen proposed a wagon. He would pay any resident of Japan (the most BSE-phobic of nations) \$18 billion to come to Alberta and eat nothing but beef for a year. If that person got deathly sick, the province would pay up.

There were no takers for what was, after all, a pretty safe bet. We're not Canada's BSE problem (yet). A mysterious illness linked to eating BSE-infected cattle parts that has killed 151 people worldwide since 1976—has

an incubation period of at least a decade. But Klen's bravado goes to the heart of a very emotional debate: just how safe is our beef in light of last May's mad cow and the discovery of a second one (also Alberta-born) in Washington state on Dec. 27? Is it true, as the government maintains, that you are a million times more likely to be run over by a car than struck with a BSE-related illness?

The short answer, say the experts, is yes. Yes, Sir, an epidemiologist and director of the school of occupational and public health at Toronto's Ryerson University, points to the experience in Britain, where 18 of the 18 of the known vCJD deaths occurred. Since the mid-1980s, more than 151,000 British cows have tested positive for BSE. The actual number of contaminated animals was likely four or five times higher, with their meat being regularly consumed by a population nearly twice the size of Canada's. Despite all that, only 143 Britons contracted vCJD—a number 15 describes as "incredibly small."

That said, he thinks it's wrong for politicians to play down the public health implications of BSE. "We are barely scratching the surface in terms of understanding this disease," says Dr. "So anyone who says we have nothing to worry about, well, that's unconscionable."

Mad cow aside, there are plenty of hot-button issues surrounding beef safety. The European Union has a longstanding ban on the import of North American beef produced with growth hormones, citing studies linking these to an increased risk of cancer. Canadian and U.S. authorities say the hormones are safe, and that the EU ban has more to do with trade than health. Other studies have raised concerns that the widespread practice of giving antibiotics to cattle may actually be promoting new strains of drug-resistant infections in animals and humans alike.

But Doug Powell, scientific director of the Food Safety Network at Ontario's Guelph University, says such concerns pale beside the biggest worry of all: food-borne illness that afflict up to one in four Canadians annually and are due to micro-organisms hiding in beef and poultry as well as (yes, alert!) fresh fruits and vegetables. Combating these outbreaks, says Powell, largely comes down to improving sanitation practices at every stage along the food chain. "It's not as exciting as chasing down mad cows," says Powell, "but this is where we should really be putting our resources."

BRIAN BENJAMIN



Whetting the appetite for organic food

Recent food scares are expected to boost the already burgeoning sector

WHITTED THORPE, a fourth-generation farmer in southern Ontario, acquired his love for property in 1956. He broke with a long-time family tradition, instead of working the land using conventional methods, he opted for techniques that allowed him to grow organic fruits and

Producers are struggling to keep up with the demand for organic products

vegetables—clean food on down land, the self-described environmentalist says. “Farmers are the first line of defence of environmental responsibility,” he says. “If we don’t take care of the land, who’s going to?” Today, Thorpe’s 12-acre farm near Millgrove, Ont., west of Toronto, supplies organic vegetables to health food stores, home-delivery businesses, wholesalers and three organic markets. Since he started, he says he’s seen the organic business grow by “leaps and bounds,” so much that local producers can’t keep up with demand. “We don’t have enough producers to supply locally what the stores need,” Thorpe says.

Demand has been climbing steadily for years, and experts expect the pace to quicken as news of toxic fish and mad cow disease help to drive an industry-wide transition toward producing safer foods. Organic food is still only a niche business in the vast agri-food universe—in 2002, it totalled about two per cent of Canada’s \$94-billion market—but that market share is changing. “There is already a certain percentage of people who gear their buying toward local, organic and seasonal,” Thorpe says. “That’s going to grow.”

Here and around the world, in Southeast Asia, farmers are converting

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Figure 2

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Öffnen

supported a previously barren landscape. But now, new dry meadows are all over the place, and herds of bison are grazing the new grass. Today the horizon is the night-lit inland body of water, and a cold

What the Soviet Union was doing to its economic policy of self-sufficiency is not dissimilar to what Joseph Stalin ordered the state supplying the Axis powers, to

...of the plant of the
...of the disease
...a second appar
...ing, with some and
...is in the eye
...more than 100 km
...are not in the

BARTON, J. L. & BARTON, J. L. 1994.

rice paddies for organic production. The European Union is developing an action plan to boost organic agriculture. Peru-based food conglomerate Grupo Danone SA last week acquired control of Stonyfield Farm, a U.S. organic yogurt maker; the industry now even has royal sponsorship: organic farming has become one of Prince Charles's pet causes.

At HomeAgriculture Canada estimates that organic sales are growing by 20 per cent a year and will reach \$3.1 billion in 2009. Some retailers are making more room on their shelves and produce counters. Three years ago, the national food giant Loblaw Cos. didn't have its own line of organic products; now, it sells 250 President's Choice organic items and has 50 more coming, well placed about the same as regular products. Geoffrey Wilson, vice president of industry and investor relations at Loblaw, says he can't reveal exactly how much of the company's sales come from organic products, but as a percentage of sales, "it's growing at a very nice pace. We're being very pleased."

Canada is already a world leader in organic exports, in large part because of the quantity, quality and price of suitable grains grown here without pesticides or genetic modification. That helps companies such as Kitchener cereal-maker Nature's Path and Toronto baker Shai Shai Bread Co., whose products are popular domestically and whose export sales to the U.S. are skyrocketing. On its own, Nature's Path boasts more than 2% of the U.S. organic breakfast cereal market.

As consumer awareness about food safety becomes more acute, many people want more than just pesticide-free produce and meat. After recent food scares, they want to know where their food comes from, or "traceability," says Daphne University professor Alfons Weonank, who teaches agricultural economics and business. If enough consumers get picky about the origins of their food, the trend will push producers toward smaller farming operations and abettors closer to their markets.

The biggest push to improve the way food is produced, says Leslie Kistner, an assistant professor of agricultural security at Kansas State University, comes when something threatens international trade. For instance, trade concerns over mad-cow disease quickly prompted Canada and the U.S. to enact strict new food-safety regulations. But if consumers demand for organic products that's transforming grocery stores, and that pressure is not about to let up, KATHYRINE MARCOTTA



Dietary detox tips

With time and, yes, extra money to buy organic, you can cut down on chemicals.

2. BUY LOCAL

Investigate the route your food has taken from the farm to the fork. Shop at a farmer's market or a locally supplied butcher and ask how animals are raised, fed and slaughtered. Local farm products contain lower levels of fungicides, which are applied to fruit and vegetables to keep them from going bad during and after shipping.

2. BUY CRISANNE

Assembly-line meat producers pump animals full of antibiotics and growth hormones because their livestock is raised in conditions conducive to disease—they're invariable and packed into confined spaces, and do not develop muscle tissue through exercise. Organically produced meats contain no chemical additives and are raised more humanely. Be wary of catchy labels that say sometimes more marketing ploys. Some fast, air-chilled chickens can still be raised on a diet of antibiotics.

3. EAT LOW IN THE FOOD CHAIN

Of all the pesticide residues found in the average diet, 55 per cent comes from meat products. Dairy products account for 23 per cent; fruit and veges, between four and six per cent each, and cereals, which rank lowest, one per cent.

4. TIME TIME TO COOK

Convenience foods like frozen lasagna, microwaveable dinners and fast food can contain low-quality, over-processed ingredients with too much fat. They can also be loaded with preservatives, additives and dyes that make food look appealing and last longer on the shelf.

S. WASH. AND PROPANE FLOW CARRIER.

Although pesticides are applied to fruit and vegetables throughout their growth cycle, washing them in lukewarm water with a teaspoon of vinegar has some benefit. It's a good idea, especially for those who have a tendency to eat right from the fridge, to empty shopping bags into the sink, soak produce for a minute, then rinse and pat it dry in a towel. **Wash** produce in fatty tissue, so avoid fatty cuts and avoid the fat. **Wash** produce in fatty tissue, so avoid fatty cuts and avoid the fat.



HOW I PREVAILED VS. CIGGIES

Why does Canada make it hard to get the stuff that helps you butt out?

THE OTHER DAY, I checked myself into rehab. When a strangely casual announcement that it is our culture. Celebrities and politicians seem to pop into rehab so frequently and nondescriptly that it's as if they're running off to spa. Anyone for drama?

Yet in my case, the news terribly shocked friends and relatives, because I wasn't trying to wean myself free of cocaine or painkillers or booze. I just wanted to quit smoking. I wanted to quit, and I knew perfectly well that I couldn't do it unless I was in a supervised residential treatment program away from my kids, my day-to-day stresses, and the

temptation of cigarettes themselves, lurking in every corner store. I knew this because I have tried and failed to quit before. The withdrawal symptoms—tension, irritability, insomnia, cravings—knocked me off course and redirected me back to my vice.

This time, I figured, I needed sedatives, counselling, yoga, massage, peer support, stress management, nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)—the whole nine yards.

"All that?" an unnamed friend inquired, "just to stop smoking?" Of course, the key word there is "just," since the education I've heard countless times in the past 22 years is "just quit, that's it," "just give up that filthy habit," "just cut it out, already," "just my no."

As obsessed as we are in this country with the perils of smoking, we seem to have a devilish time grasping the realities of tobacco use, such as the fact that withdrawing from an addictive drug is a more complicated matter than giving up cocaine, or asking up screens. Health Canada mandates that cigarette packages display heart-fogging messages for smokers to read each time they reach for a butt. You're familiar with these messages, such as "Smoking can kill you" and "Smoking causes impotence." Well, one of the messages is that "nicotine is more addictive than heroin." Under the circumstances, "just quitting" doesn't work at all well.

Less than 10 per cent of the people who quit smoking on New Year's Day will remain smoke-free by next New Year's Eve. Of those who do succeed, most will relapse and then quit again, on average, six times before they manage to go a whole year without taking a puff. This doesn't include smokers who are so disillusioned by the prospect of withdrawal that they never quit at all.

So, why is it so shocking that a smoker would need to go into rehab, and why are residential treatment programs for nicotine so scarce that it took me weeks of inactivity. With nattering local news? I finally found two week-long programs in the U.S. If more exist out there, all I can say is that they are harder to locate than the Loch Ness monster.

It is also, I might add, much harder to find NRT products—designed to keep smokers off cigarettes—than to find ciggies themselves. At a drug store in Ottawa recently, I had to wait 20 minutes behind three people getting their prescriptions so I could request nicotine gum from behind the pharmacist's

THE implication is that ingesting pure nicotine is somehow more dangerous than smoking it, which is flat-out wrong.

counter. With my nerves frayed by withdrawal, I was on the verge of hysterics by the time I reached the front of the line.

A couple of years ago, the Ontario Medical Association urged Health Canada to allow four access to nicotine gum, patches and the like, pointing out the absurdity of restricting these products more tightly than tobacco. The nicotine inhaler has been approved by Health Canada and will soon be available, but the nicotine lozenge and nasal spray, both used in Europe and the U.S., are not sold here.

The implication is that ingesting pure nicotine is somehow more dangerous than smoking it, which is flat-out wrong. Nicotine

itself doesn't cause any of the diseases associated with smoking. Beyond being addictive, it's considered quite benign. The delivery system, not the drug, is lethal, and if we can be weaned off that and switched to nasal spray, say, or the patch, or a combination of NRT, then Health Canada should be shouting out that message loud and clear.

According to the 2002 Instanbul survey of the Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey, the most widely held belief among failed quitters, in Canada's population of 5.4 million smokers, is that they need "more willpower" to rid themselves of cigarettes. I find that answer to be terribly and sadly poignant, because it suggests that smokers have taken to heart the message in our society that smoking is fundamentally a moral issue, that it has nothing to do with the medical picture of addiction and everything to do with individual feelings of shame or

When I go to a movie theatre and find myself watching a tragic, heart wrenching public service ad about a waitress in Ottawa who is dying of lung cancer because of smoking like me, I would also like to see an optimistic announcement along the lines of, "Hello! Ah, smokers, guess what? Good news! We have perfected new methods of nicotine delivery that don't make you sick, and don't tickle you with guilt and shame!"

NRTs need to be available wherever cigarettes are sold, and people should be able to use them for as long as necessary. In my rehab program, at the St. Helen's Center for Health in California, we were urged to stay with our nicotine replacement products for at least a year to lower the risk of relapse.

Unfortunately, I have already had to give up one of the most effective treatments I was prescribed, the nasal spray, because I can't find it in Canada. I also had to stop taking Zylton, because it isn't covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan. But hey, I still have my gum, and the patch, and some willpower. Baby, I've come a long way. ☐



'WE WOULD LOVE TO BE NO. 1'

But athletes need better support, the Canadian Olympic Committee boss says

PROD SUPPLIERS of so many winners that define a country, Canada's winter and summer Olympians have given us a lot to cheer about in recent years: double-hockey gold medals in Salt Lake City, Carolina Le May Doan's dominance on the speed-skating oval, Donovan Bailey's sprint to victory in Atlanta. But those podium-topping performances may be getting harder to come by after years of cuts in government funding. The 2000 Summer Games in Sydney produced a disappointing medal tally, and this coming August, Athens may prove to be the same story. Chris Rudge, 58, the chief executive officer of the Canadian Olympic Committee, recently sat down with *Maclean's* Jeannette Gauthier to talk about racism, managing expectations, and building for future success.

Over the years, Canadians have become more focused on results at the Olympics. What are the COC's hopes for Athens?

I wouldn't want to put a precise number on it, but we'll probably finish in the area where we did in Sydney—somewhere between 12 and 18 medals. I don't think we're on a major upswing in our summer sports. For Athens, we know we have some programs that are very strong: rowing, diving and judo. Other programs haven't performed well for a long time and they need some attention.

Should Canadians lower their expectations? The Olympics create great passion. People get very invested about how well our teams and athletes are doing. From our perspective, what we hope to see is a recognition in Canada that medals are not just a fanfare of the raw athleticism leading up to the Games, but years of preparation. It's easy to make an athlete one of the top 20 or 25 competitors in the world, but to make them capable of reaching the podium requires a significant amount of time and money. The COC is trying to help the various levels of government in Canada understand the investment that will have to be made if we're

going to fulfill the kind of expectations that Canadians bring to the Games.

There's been a lot of concern about the state of the facilities in Athens. Are you convinced the venue and athlete housing are going to be up to snuff?

I certainly don't have any worries about the athletes' village—I have it's going to be great. The venues I'm sure I'm sure will be perceived to be very good, but there may be some issues with transportation. What everybody is very concerned about is security, given where Athens is and the events in the world right now. We can't control that, but we can take extra steps to make sure our athletes are well looked after when they are there. We've been working closely with the RCMP to ensure that. Hopefully we won't have any security or safety issues, or drug issues, or political issues like have this occurred in Salt Lake City with the judging figures skating.

The last federal budget gave a \$5-million-a-year funding boost to developing athletes, far short of the \$30- to \$40-million-a-year boost the COC says Canada needs to be really competitive at both the summer and winter Games. How close do you think you are to obtaining that money?

That's tough to say. I think we need even more than that. Right now, the federal government is providing about \$34 million a year for high-performance sport. I think that has to go to about \$100 million. Currently, if we increase the funding pool by 100 to 150 per cent, we are going to do a lot better than we ever have. But the key is that it has to be done now. If we're going to make an impact at the Vancouver Games in 2010, we can't make that investment in 2008 or 2009. The horizon of development for high-performance athletes is six or seven years.

Do you think this new Paul Martin government understands that the window for doing well at 2010 is closing soon?

I get the sense they are more aware of that than our governments have been in the past, so I'm optimistic. We finished fourth in Salt Lake in terms of medals. We've increased our total at every Winter Games since Lake Placid in 1980. We think if we get the support we're looking for that it's not unreasonable to look at us being one of the top performers in the world. Certainly, we would love to be number 1.

Some of those nations that consistently finish above us in the standings concentrate their resources on either winter or summer events. Would Canada be better off focusing on just one type of Olympics?

I don't think we would perform better. We are a legitimate summer and winter sports nation. But could we, and should we, be more selective in the sports we support? The consensus we face in this country is that it's expensive for Canadians to go everywhere a champion. But the idea of allocating resources disproportionately to those areas where we really can create heroes and win is an idea that we should probably debate.

You've been in the job for a year now. How do you formed an opinion?

I think there should be more focus on helping those who have a chance to be the best get the resources and support they need. I don't think it should be as cutthroat as it is in some countries, where they totally eat all the support and development for other sports. But I believe our funding should be more weighted in supporting excellence. We take a very egalitarian approach to it in Canada, but not all of the sports are equal, nor all of the programs are well run, and some of those athletes have very few people who are active in their.

There are a number of competing fundraising organizations for Olympic athletes right now. Is there a danger in having money being brought in by individuals, athletes or programs, when perhaps it could be better used elsewhere?



hiring to deal with the issue of too much money—a unique challenge that we've never had in this country before. I'm prepared to deal with those kinds of frustrations and I think most of our Canadian athletes would be prepared to do. It would sure be a nice problem to have.

The latest doping scandal—ever disgraced athlete such as Tracy—has received a lot of attention. Are you satisfied that Canadian athletes are clean?

I think we've come a long way from the dark

days of the late 1980s. Canada is a world leader now in terms of the approach of our athletes to training and competing clean. I think the recent Beatrix Scott victory was a wonderful tribute to those principles. A lot of the investigation is still going on. Is it a totally level playing field right now? Obviously not. Clearly the kind of incentives associated with winning—whether in terms of money or prestige—is going to compromise athletes in some circumstances. Hopefully it's not going to happen again here, but I'm not naive about it.

The COC's deal with Reeb to outfit the Canadian team expires at the end of this year. How does the company fits out the U.S., British and Barbados teams as well, do you think it's time that a Canadian company with a little less exposure does the uniforms?

Reeb has been outstanding for us, and we'd be very happy to carry on with them, if they are the chosen supplier for the games to come. It doesn't bother me that they work with other countries. They do a great job.

JEANNETTE GAUTHIER/OLYMPICS CANADA



BATTLE OF THE FORECASTERS

Are you an optimist or are you a pessimist? That is the question.

IS THERE any real point in issuing annual economic and financial forecasts? I am bi-ased because I get paid to forecast the capital markets. Yet no one has a better accuracy record in the prediction business which, like long-range weather forecasting, depends on the interaction of millions of forces, events and changes. But while other sectors such as productivity and inflation are variable, collective human nature is the sole constant in history. The capital markets—bonds, stocks and commodity—are the record of how

that nature affects the economy and financial markets, with us up to the second steering system.

Most economic and financial forecasts can be classified as either optimistic or pessimistic. For example, Ed Byrne, Wall Street's top-ranked economist, has a sunny disposition and can usually find reasons to be optimistic. His main counterpart is Stephen Roach of Morgan Stanley, who can always find reasons to be pessimistic.

The economic progress of the human race since Adam Smith published *Wealth of Nations* in 1776, the same year that another declaration of human liberty, has been greater than in all the previous centuries of recorded history—and precisely for the reasons Smith was out in his splendidly optimistic treatise. Yet it has waned since 1798 with Thomas Malthus's pessimistic *Essay on Population* for influence on forecasters and planners. Smith believed the economic progress that had become possible in a liberal industrial society could supply the resources needed to meet human needs, the gloomy Malthus, a Hobbesian, believed unchecked population growth would swamp whatever wealth was created. For him, people were our most noxious product.

The freedomers we consider fundamental today give us the opportunity to rise above, to express, to create and to build—to the good and bad ends. These freedoms are subject to restraint in the public interest, but the true liberal understands the need for each restraint and the reason why they should not be unnecessarily intrusive.

Capitalism is freedom in the economic sphere—the dollar and cents equivalent of

free speech and free press. Serious businesses and unions are inevitably involved with government, which has the power to tax, award privileges and impose, economic man needs more regulating than speaking, writing or watching man. But not so much more that the creative and risk-taking juices (what Keynes called "animal spirits") are neutralized. Then the just stagnation, and all energy is devoted to fighting over shares of a finite size.

That divide between optimism and pessimism was reflected in the last U.S. presidential election. George W. Bush, who believes in the positive power of economic growth, faced Al Gore, who believes unchecked economic growth will destroy the planet. (To his credit, Gore has continued his campaign to save resources even

the greatest rewards usually go to those who find good reasons for optimism—and move accordingly.) In particular, after a major market correction such as the "Triple Whammy" crash of technology stocks, there are splendid new long-term investment opportunities.

I am aware of all the gloom reasons for gloom adduced by Smith and other leading pessimists. The stock market recovery has been too quick, and it has been led by "fads and fogs"—low priced stock trades with no earnings, the most dangerous minerals in the Wall Street zoo. American consumers are overburdened with debt, the U.S. dollar is crashing, Iraq is a quagmire, North American jobs are disappearing to Asia by the millions via the Internet, the combined U.S. fiscal and trade deficits are approaching 10 per cent of GDP, an unsustainable level that threatens the global economy.

There is no consensus of the pessimists' claims. But my optimistic nature tells me to reject such forecasts of despair because we have extensive evidence that have defied Smith and Freud Malthus to remain. Asia, which until recent decades was bordered by fast-growing populations with seemingly insatiable economic ambitions, is heading for global economic leadership.

Through economic freedom. Yes, the jobless-economic problems of China, Taiwan, India, South Korea and Thailand aren't auspicious for either democracy or capitalism, but they are responding to an effective cure of the human spirit that should defy any liberal. The billions of people who were supposed to exist forever on the edge of starvation are experiencing the benefits on sustained growth toward the land of life for the first time.

For them and, I suspect, for us, 2004 will be a very good year. It might even be a great one. ■

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WAR ON THE REDS

Canada joined others in trying to overthrow the Bolshevik Revolution

ON NOV. 18, 1918, as the armistice that ended the First World War took hold along the Western Front, far to the east the gunners of the 16th Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery, were fighting for their lives as a battle for the Russian village of Tulay. The gunners were among 4,491 Canadians and more than 260,000 British, French, Italian, Polish, Finnish, Serbian, U.S., Czechoslovak and Japanese troops who had invaded Russia after the overthrow of the czar in 1917 and the subsequent Bolshevik Revolution that led to the collapse of the war's Eastern Front.

Wary from four years of the Great War, Canada was "not keen on upstaging the fight against the Bolsheviks," says historian Jack Granatstein. "Yet we found ourselves forced to participate as part of the price of

One four-day skirmish in January 1919 was fought in cold that went down to -41°C

Empire." Imperial price aside, prime minister Robert Borden's cabinet never wholeheartedly endorsed the deployment of troops to Russia, and in public opposition grew and the military large reported after the armistice, the Borden government turned decisively against it.

The initial reasons for the invasion varied, from stopping Turkey, Germany's ally and Russian neighbour, from capturing the rich Caspian Sea Baku oil fields, to preventing the Germans from seizing the huge amount of war material the Allies had shipped to the Russian port of Archangel, nearby Murmansk, and Vladivostok on the Pacific. Most importantly, the Allies wanted to support the

anti-Bolshevik forces, then engaged in a civil war against Lenin's Red Army. Those Whites had pledged to support the British Empire and thus forestall the transfer of German divisions to the Western Front, a move which Allied leaders feared could cost them the war.

But after the armistice, the invasion became a halfhearted intervention in the Russian Civil War and ended in disaster in 1920, although Japanese troops remained for another two years. For Canada, which lost seven soldiers in battle during the adventure, the largest and most controversial deployment was the dispatch of 3,500 troops to Vladivostok. Announced by acting prime minister Norman Ross on Aug. 15, 1918, this commitment was more suitable for the fighting between Borden (who was in

London for meetings of the Imperial War Cabinet) and his cabinet in Ottawa than for any subsequent military action.

By the time Rowell spoke, two thousand Canadian troop movements to Russia were already well underway. The first began on Jan. 14, 1918, when 40 volunteer officers and NCOs reported to the Tower of London to begin what they were told was a "hazardous enterprise in a foreign theatre of war." Eventually, they ended up in Baku while hundreds of other Allied troops, including 16 Canadians, landed in Murmansk on June 25 to secure the war material that so worried the War Office.

Meanwhile, the nearly 540-man Canadian artillery brigade, part of which fought at Julga, had arrived at Archangel on Oct. 3, 1918 and fought its first battle just two weeks later, holding more than 3,000 Red Guards at bay. Following the Armistice Day Julga engagement, the Bolsheviks harassed the Allies throughout the brutal Russian winter, but the Canadians were undeterred. One four-day skirmish in January 1919 cost two Canadian lives and was fought in cold that went down to -40°C. One of the dead was Capt. Oliver A. Mowat of Campbellton, N.B., who was mortally wounded while directing fire from a battery. After the battle, Mowat's body was smuggled back to Canada by his men and interred in his hometown.

In Murmansk, meanwhile, the Allied force had grown to almost 15,000, including another 100 Canadians under Col. John Lester of Vancouver. In mid-February, fully two months after the armistice, these Canadians saw their first major action. Led by Lester and other Canadian officers, a 600-man mixed Allied force mounted a winter attack, in -40°C weather, threatened the town of Sogdicha, finding war material and rail cars manufactured in New Scott. Canadian-made weapons were also discovered two months later when Maj. Peter Anderson of Edmonton led 94 men in a surprise assault on a town 32 km south of Sogdicha.

At 3,840 men (and one nursing sister), the Canadian Siberian Expeditionary Force was clearly a major military initiative, compared to the some 600 men that Borden, apparently with discussion as such either in Ottawa, authorized for Baku, Marmarinsk and Archangel from the first request for troops; ministers were wary of undertaking



Volunteers were told of a "hazardous enterprise in a foreign theatre of war"

an offensive policy in Russia. Many Canadians had cheered the fall of the autocratic czar and would oppose sending troops to a Russian side show. But cabinet was swayed by the prime minister: "it will be of some distinction," he told them, "to have all British forces in Siberia under the command of a Canadian officer." The officer in question, Brig. Gen. James H. Elmsley, would be able to appeal a command from the Allied commander-in-chief in Siberia, Japanese Gen. Kikaku Otori, to the War Office in London. Even more importantly,

MANY Canadians had cheered the fall of the autocratic czar and opposed sending troops to a Russian side show

For Borden, who had doubted during the war for Canadian command of Canadian troops, the War Office could not give permission to Elmsley without the approval of the Canadian government. Finally, Borden told cabinet, the expeditionary force would bring the nation sufficient prestige to help businesses secure Russian orders, helping, mining and farming concessions. Cabinet reluctantly approved, and on Oct. 11 Elmsley sailed with the first contingent of troops

None of Borden's arguments survived the Nov. 11 armistice. Eleven days after war's end, agriculture minister T. A. Cressy, on behalf of his cabinet colleagues who were against intervening in another nation's affairs, and were simply tired of war, declared that he was "absolutely opposed" to sending troops to Siberia. Borden telegraphed Ottawa, pleading that the troops would not be used offensively, and restating the prestige and economic arguments. Three days later, with the normally pro-Borden *Toronto Globe* editorializing against the venture, and Opposition MP's like Andrew Barry McMaster saying he'd rather Canada recover all her war-moving machines "than that the blood of a single Canadian had been spilled in vain," cabinet telegraphed Borden, telling him that public and political support for the CSEF had evaporated. Borden's response from across the ocean warned of harm to Canada's reputation and cheer, impasse with the so-long and fro-ing, tenuous cabinet to "dispose of the matter without further reference to us." So cabinet assumed itself and decided to let Elmsley and the first 1,100 Canadians remain in Vladivostok and send another 3,700 more, now en route, to continue—but to deny them authorization for any offensive military action.

Although it took until April 1919 for the War Office to finally approve the withdrawal of the last Canadians from Russia, even Borden had by then turned against Allied intervention. In February the War Office agreed him by torpedoing a peace conference with the Bolsheviks that he had proposed and at which he was to have been the chief Imperial delegate. Borden resumed a laissez-faire plan from the British secretary of state for war, the radical centrist Winston Churchill, who rightly believed that Canada's decision to withdraw its troops was but a harbinger of the collapse of the Allied efforts to destroy the "red barbarism of Bolshevism." Commented Borden, "Russia would have to work out her own salvation," without Canada's interference, for "it would be impossible to persuade the Canadian Parliament to undertake any active operations however limited."

Some 15 years later, then prime minister Jean Chrétien might have had exactly such thoughts in mind when he refused to commit Canadian forces to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

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Film | BRIAN D. JOHNSON



A MONGREL IMAGINATION

Émigré talents converge in Montreal to make an animated masterpiece

IT'S A RARE event when a wildly original film with a dark sense of humour and an uncompromising sense of art becomes a crowd-pleaser—never mind an animated film that uses scraps for its colour scheme, takes perverse delight in blowing up frogs, and has an ugly queen and four bawdy old dames as its main characters. But that's the case with *The Triplets of Belleville*, a masterpiece with a mongrel pedigree that is quincunxentially Gaudin. It was written and directed by Sylvain Chomet, a French-born animator who made the film while living in Montreal. It was designed by Éric Tanneau, a Moroccan art teacher

who defected in the late 1980s by hopping a fence in Newfoundland during a refueling stop on a holiday flight to Cuba. And the music was composed by Benoît Charest, a Quebec musician whose influences range from Django Reinhardt to Frank Zappa, and whose instruments include a fridge rack and a vacuum cleaner. When *The Triplets of Belleville* premiered in Cannes last May, it produced the most vigorous audience response of the festival. More recently, this Canadian co-production with France and Belgium has graced a lot of Top 10 lists, and may serve as a dark horse rival to *Pina* by Wim Wenders at the Oscars.

The story, which unfolds with almost no dialogue, concerns a lonely Parisian man whose only friend is an English dog named Bruno. His grandmother, a Portuguese lady with a wild look, decides to enroll the boy into a champion cyclist. She pushes him through relentless drills, using an egg beater to massage his leg gags calves at the end of the day. Then, just as her prize athlete is on the verge of winning the Tour de France, he's kidnapped by mysterious men in black. With Bruno making his way to an ocean front, the granny crosses the Atlantic in a rented packboat and ends up in Belleville, a raucous Manhattan crossed with Montreal and Quebec City. There, she's taken in by an eccentric trio of retired cabaret singers, the triplets of the title. And, guided by Bruno, this blue-eyed posse hunts down the French mafia slave traders who have abducted the boy.

As the movie goes along with its bizarrely creative sequence after another, it's filled by a misanthropic wit that's more de Sade than Disney. There's no nostalgic scene in which

one of the triplets uses explosives to blast a load of frogs out of the river for dinner. Charest revels in satirizations of French gastronomy, including an enormous woman who bends over backwards so far that her head practically touches the ground. But Tanneau never loses their own share of mockery—Belleville's pedestrians are universally obese.

From the Quebec-Gotham architecture to French penguins portrayed in black-ink tangle hulk, the film's surreal visual design has seductive beauty. Although Charest mixes traditional techniques with three-dimensional computer effects, it all adds up to a movie that's old-fashioned, hand-painted animation, with elements homages to legend such as filmmaker Jacques Tati and actress Jeanne Moreau. Meanwhile,

Charest's soundtrack conjures up vintage Paris with accents of Paul and McCartney valleys of swing jazz that send you shuffling out of the theatre with a sugar in your heart.

The Cooler offers a cruder slice of dark-humoured comedy about simple folk who get mistreated by gypsies. Within 11. Macy plays the title role as Estelle, a chronic loser employed by, and indebted to, Shelly (Alec Baldwin), the boss of an old-style Vegas casino. Her life is as the cat's-paw "cruiser"—his lack is so bad that he just has to walk up to a table to start down a winning streak. But his karma changes when he turns into an artificially handsome with a way cool cat woman (Dixie Myers Bell).

The concept of this hand fairy tale a Baldwin's take-no-prisoners performance as Mardian (who makes a mean killer outfit with a nostalgia for the old, vintage Vegas. Macy's sad-sack love is avenge-inducing picture of barbarism. And with a plot that spins like a loaded roulette wheel through one too many turns (imagine the Coen brothers' *Miller's Crossing*), *The Cooler* left me cold.



The bizarrely inventive sequences are fuelled by a wit more de Sade than Disney

THE ECSTASY OF NORVAL MORRISSEAU

His vibrant work is finally getting the loftiest curatorial attention

MY FIRST ENCOUNTER with fierce, eyes greatness, was at the side door that led out to our garage, when I was about nine years old. I ran to answer a knock one winter evening, but froze before turning the knob when I caught sight of the face peering down at me through the little window: dark and angular, with a narrow nostrache, and something about the eyes I called my father, and he lay in the unfamiliar visitor. I learned later that it was Norval Morrisseau, the Ojibway artist, come to talk to my parents about buying his paintings. This would have been about eight years after Morrisseau's first gallery show in Toronto,

in 1961, caused a sensation in the big city at its core, and those years he had earned even wider popular acclaim for a huge mural executed at Ripco 67. Hard drinking had kept him from seeing money, so there he was going door-to-door in the bitter cold. Of course, I didn't know any of this then, only that a very tall Indian was an unusual visitor at the home of a white family like ours in the northwestern Ontario gold-mining town of Cobden, on the rocky shore of Red Lake. Probably still in

the figures. Morrisseau originated that way of painting, probably influencing Native artists across Canada. Not our average couple of his piece wasn't unusual. Up there at the Red Lake district, where he first painted and peddled his work, his bold acrylics were quite common in ordinary homes. In fact, despite his sustained fame since those early days, enough of his work remains in the area today that a travelling exhibition of locally owned paintings was mounted three years ago by the little Red Lake Museum.

A somewhat bigger show is now in the works, which is what has me thinking about Morrisseau again. The National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa is planning a major retrospective of his paintings for early 2006. It's doubtful Morrisseau will be able to attend the opening, now in his early 70s; he lives in an aging house in Neudorf, S.C., suffering from Parkinson's disease, and no longer able to paint. Few living Canadian artists

would even be considered for such an exhibition. But for an Aboriginal painter to be singled out for this career-capping treat is especially remarkable. Until recently, the notion of accorded a First Nations artist working in a traditional vein the most serious curatorial attention would have been considered outrageous. It was discussed in all Morrisseau has been hanging around the side door of the fine-art establishment for decades. Now, it seems, he is most definitely in.

NOT THAT his huge output hasn't been admired, or accepted, long before now. In fact, the painting of Morrisseau and his followers, along with their sculpture and pot-making and the West Coast school largely revived by Bill Reid, are the only homegrown art styles to be widely embraced by Canadians since the Group of Seven caught on in the 1920s. Notice, art in our national art. Yet contemporary Aboriginal art has often been left to museums of anthropology and archeology—not the halls of fine art. So an elegant silver bear brooch by the Haida master Charles Idloutshu, or an ambiguous soapstone animal by Inuit carver Andy Mills, or, for that matter, a Morrisseau thunderbird, are measures that have for the most part been considered unalike

of their particular cultures. They're not to be viewed as art in the way the word is used where the object in question is, say, a classic Regency landscape or an elite contemporary installation piece.

But the era of as signification may be ending. The upcoming Morrisseau blockbuster is only one sign. Another is a broader policy shift at the National Gallery. For the first time this year, the glass-and-granite institution, a



Shaman in flight into the after world to bring back information in five panels (1959-60), above; Thunderbird (c.1960), below left; and The Ojibwa (c.1962) are classic works by the artist, shown far right at Ontario's Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre in 1988 or 1991.



popular stop for thousands of tourists to the capital, is showing Aboriginal work as part of its main Canadian exhibit. The experiment is called *Art of the Land*, and the juxtaposition it creates are striking. An aboriginally painted hide made by a Seneca artist of the mid-19th century stratches out before a Paul Kane painting of Plains Indians dancing from the same period—a visual essay in historical perspectives. And then there's the pure aesthetic jolt given and by putting a finely woven Tlingit robe of yellow, blue and natural wool across from a lively David Milne painting of a canoeist that echoes the colours and patterns of the West Coast totem.

WANDERING through *Art of the Land*, the gallery goes over two streams of Canadian art coverage. Morrisseau can be confused with having brought them closer together. His painting is an indigestible link between the old ways of Aboriginal art and the story of contemporary Native artists into the world of collectors and critics. His experience is strange.

Morrisseau was born in the early 1930s (exact dates vary in different accounts) to a family from Sand Point, a reserve east of Thunder Bay. He was raised there by his devoutly Catholic grandmother, who taught him his faith, and his grandfather, a hunter and trapper who told him the old stories, which Morrisseau recounted vividly in the 1965 collection *Legends of My People: The Gourd-Jobber*. My parents bought the book when I was a kid, and I devoured the strange tales—the ones about humans flesh eating strange-making a particular impression—on the Morrisseau paintings in the room room embracing the experience.)

The clashing religious influences of his mother's grandmothers play out in some of his most powerful work as a struggle to reconcile Christian and Ojibwa beliefs. He has painted himself as Christ, but also shows rain running into a thunderbolt. To see him as caught between two ways—in a stand-off for all conflicted Natives—in too pat. He's an individual artist, with a living, allegory. Still, it's impossible to entirely view him as his face-and-words worlds alternating as emblematic of the reality of First Nations.

His painting career began when he was working at the pulp-mill in Cochrane, my hometown, in 1959. His earliest art shows him reaching back for images, deep into his



Morrisseau, now in his 70s and suffering from Parkinson's, can no longer hold a brush

grandfather's stories. In that sense, he is a traditionalist. But he is also a revolutionary, reaching outward, trying to figure out how to transmit a message—and sell his work. "He was asking, 'What is it that I need to make myself successful?'" says Carleton University art historian Ruth Phillips, who has written extensively on Morrisseau.

He found his answer: Dr. Joseph Weyssert, a physician who lived in Cochrane

IN his painting, we see the Native heritage most Canadians want to celebrate: mysterious, deep, rooted in our land

in the late 1950s and early 1960s, bought Morrisseau's paintings and showed him his collection of art books about not only European painting but also Masajo and West Coast Native art, which Morrisseau reportedly studied on for inspiration and ideas. As well, he met Schoon Dowdney, an author and an actor and anthropologist who was travelling through northwestern Ontario cataloguing

Native rock painting. Dowdney wrote that he was startled to meet an artist "who actually looked like an artist," and gave advice and encouragement to the young man with the sensitive face and evident talent. Morrisseau was soon taken on by flamboyant Toronto dealer Jack Pollack, who promoted the 1962 show that vaulted him into celebrity.

Since then, the story has often been told one: Old newspaper clippings on Morrisseau's life can be sorted into two categories: glowing reviews of his periodic art shows, and scathing accounts of his frequent plunges into public drinking. In this, again, it's hard not to make him an emblematic figure. "People want to see him as a tragic, romantic artist," says Phillips. That's part of it. More precisely, a tragic Indian artist. In his painting, we see the Native heritage most Canadians want to celebrate: mysterious, deep, rooted in our own land, and, in the words of Robert Bly, the Irish-Columbian poet and translator of *Hebrew Literature*, "the Greek myth." But in Morrisseau's addiction, we see a portrait of the failure that blights both reserve and urban Aboriginals.

I WENT to visit Morrisseau last summer at his nursing home in Nemadji on Voyageur Island. A young couple, Gabe and Michelle Vadas, who live not far away, are his main



link to the world. Morrisseau met Gabe Vadas when they were both hanging out on the streets of Vancouver in 1987. "He was wearing a dirty, stained blanket and he was very dirty," Vadas recalls. "They had coffee at a McDonald's and struck up a friendship. Since then Vadas has acted as a combination of agent, personal assistant and surrogate son. It's an odd relationship, but one that seems to work. Gallery owners who were sceptical at first have accepted Vadas as a stabilizing influence. Morrisseau has painted Gabe and Michelle's children with grandfatherly affection.

Vadas takes me to see Morrisseau at the nursing home. He's in a dispute with his manager (thereby when we arrive, Parkinson's

has robbed him of clear speech, so it's hard to tell exactly what's wrong. While matters are sorted out, I survey his room. Lots of pictures of his family, including grown children back in northern Ontario with whom he has little contact now. (His estranged wife, Harriet, died several years ago.) On his bedside, a coffee table book of his paintings, a couple more of West Coast Native art, and the paperback *Shishana: Ancient Wisdom for Today*, on the new age religion Morrisseau has followed since 1995. While I take notes, he takes one of me. His familiar eyes look anxious, if not downright hostile. "It's a ghost from your past," Vadas tells him with a laugh, explaining that Tim from

Gabe (left) is Morrisseau's surrogate hold that colour and memory back borders

Cochrane. "We struggle to make that afternoon, after Morrisseau has been taken for his daily drive.

And so a few hours later Morrisseau has been helped into a lawn chair in the carpet of Vadas's bungalow. There's a breeze that smells of the nearby ocean, a soft tingling in the bush country north of Lake Superior. He's got a cup of Starbucks coffee that he drinks through the hole in the lid, raising it slowly to his lips with hands far too shaky to hold a brush. He can manage only a few words at a time. I venture a question about the National Gallery show. "Don't care about that shit," Morrisseau says. "When I ask why not, he replies, 'Sure, Godfish!'"

I try a few questions about the old days, but he seems to feel they are barely worth the huge effort it takes to answer. On the first Pollack show, one word: "Inventive!" On what drive he is going to the first place "Ask God." About his struggles with alcohol, though, he talks in breath and gasps out his long reply: "I'd do it all over again. I'd have a better approach. I'd really get drunk." Asked what his happiest memory is, he says without hesitation: "Grandparents." Then he mutters something. I take it to be about his grandmother's cooking, so I ask what food he remembers best, thinking he might say something about bannock or moose meat. But he scolds and gets out: "Gingers." Of course. The Christmas treat of his grandmother.

Before an hour has passed he's a struggle of talking seems to be too much for him. Vadas takes under a driven to his room. We go out hardware houses with good views of the islands off Nemadji's pretty harbour. Morrisseau grips a railing as the morning haze. He says he needs more money, although he has some from an sales agency he co-owns. Vadas asks him what he would buy with it. "Cassidy and grapes," he says. Such a sad answer. Finally, they drop off at the dock where I can catch a foot-plat back to Vancouver. My hands seem small with Morrisseau's grip and his mugs, "Come back and see us!" But that seems a long shot. By accident I got my look at him; his prize. Now I have sought him out in his old age. From here on, I'll have to be satisfied with looking at his paintings. Thankfully, the opportunities for all of us to do that will be getting a whole lot better. ■

BODY LANGUAGE

For two trail-blazing choreographers from Quebec, the message is in the muscles

TWENTY YEARS ago, a generation of bold young Quebecers began redefining the performing arts. Theatre veterans such as Robert Lepage and Gilles Milner incorporated dance and other disciplines into visually astonishing spectacles. A street performer named Guy Laliberté reinvented the big top with Cirque du Soleil. Choreographers including Marie Chouinard, Ginette Laurin, Richard Leduc and Daniel Léveillé became forces in the avant-garde dance scene here and, according to some commentators, put Canada on the map of modern dance. All are still going strong, with Leduc and Léveillé just returning from triumphal, year-and-a-half circuits through Europe.

Dancers and critics alike have a chance to see why Leduc and Léveillé continue to be visionaries of dance: the two choreographers began the Canadian legs of their separate, three-year tours in Vancouver during the next few weeks. The artists, who are greeted at the time Montreal company, Le Garage Mouffe Ave, stand out for constantly "pushing the envelope of contemporary dance," says Montreal Arts Centre dance producer Cathy Levy. They're "shaking the roots of this past," she continues, "and created new styles, new looks, new ideas for how the body moves in space, and how it expresses ideas, ideas, emotions."

In their most recent works, however, the body is not simply the medium—it's the message. In one sequence of Léveillé's *Amour, amour* (see *Love, Acid* and *Mus*, opening on Feb. 17 at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre, and at Intervivante Editions and Terasaki), for instance, a woman stuffs men's right arms tied to the front behind the legs, through her mouth. She then uses that as a prop to the rest of her body into a swift, graceful spin, landing in an arabesque position she elegantly breaks, replacing it with the crouch of a

ape, or the grace of a swan. An arrangement of *World's The Four Seasons* (opening in an exclusive video solo split out from the sound system).

The women and the piece's three other male dancers are—besides beginning several of the hour-long performance—called. The effect is to contrast the slender, vulnerable body (the really emphasizes the soft texture of the skin and the gentle pulsing of the abdomen) with the undulating snail of the (represented by both the abstractions of the

poet and the sense of thwarted promise that seems to run through the dancers' instructions). Léveillé decided to remove all the dancers' clothing only late in the day, one month before completing the dance. The choreographer is pleased—if a little surprised—in the critical support for his decision, not one review has suggested the nudity is inappropriate. "The piece is totally different when you put clothes on," he reflects. "Especially if you put small clothes on, like a swimming suit. That just looks very. What you see when they are made is truth. They can't hide."

Leduc too wants to strip the body of all symbolism. "When we're down and have a cup of coffee," he comments, "10 per cent has to do with lifting the cup to your lips, and 90 per cent has to do with perceiving yourself in a way that you feel exposed, yourself—even when you're alone." He adds, "We're able to transcend function—but we don't necessarily understand the body" in *Amour* (opening on Jan. 22 in Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Theatre, and traveling to Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal). Leduc too disdains the role-to-be-grantedness of the way we perceive (or might say feel to perceive) the body, although his approach is more inflated than Léveillé's. More dancers come and go, creating a sense of complexity, layered emotions. In one scene, a woman standing behind a kneeling man is postured—and with lightning speed—runs her hand across his brow and then just so rigidly, he raises her hand to her own brow, mouth and temples, suggesting the unconscious, everyday act of smoothing her hair behind her ears. The performers then break into a short, speedy pas de deux before repeating the first sequence. A pounding, frenetic piano-collectively David Lang drives the action. In another scene, a dancer performs a

bourrée (alternating steps on points) so quickly, her legs actually appear to wobble. Lace cages and clove lighting make it difficult to get a clear, unobstructed view. Leduc's combination of suggestive, almost obscenous, movement and staging techniques prevents the audience from seeing simple, unconscious empathy with the dancer. "We're forced, in a way, to look at the body—in function, in metaphorical movement and in form."

Leduc and Léveillé not only have very different choreographic sensibilities, they're also taken radically different career paths. After establishing himself as, in his words, "one of the hot guys in Montreal" in the early 1980s, Léveillé gave up touring. He opted, instead, to teach—he's a dance professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal—and, with the company he established in 1991 (Daniel Léveillé nouvelle danse), mount short-run productions for local audiences. As such, says Levy, "he's influenced many, many people who've danced and studied with him." Working largely with dancers between 19 and 25, he's developed a fascination with youth and the intensity of their emotional lives. *Amour*, like his 1998 production, *Utopie* (Utopia), explores issues of desire and male taking. "I like that crazy savage energy," says the 51-year-old. "The audience doesn't see it as the overwhelmingly positive reaction to the piece's 2001 premiere that convinced Léveillé to take *Amour* on the road."

Meanwhile, Leduc, 49, has strayed much farther from home. He formed Leduc-Durcan (the forerunner to his current company, La La La Human Steps) in 1988, and has since gone much of his time and energy abroad. In the process, he's earned an international reputation as "one of the pillars of contemporary art," according to one Moscow dance critic. And, says Levy, Leduc's paved the way for his contemporaries—"There's a very large market now for Canadian choreographers in Europe." Quebec dance troupes used to predominate in that market, something Levy attributes to the province's artists feeling they were "breaking with tradition," as well as "a very strong commitment" to finding a dance in Quebec. But, adds Levy, today in Europe "you could get as well as in the Toronto Dance Theatre, Crystal Pite's *Kidd Rides* or The Holy Body Troupe from Vancouver." Now Canadians have a chance to check out the process. ■



'THE piece is totally different when you put clothes. Especially if you put small clothes on, like a swimming suit. That just looks sexy. What you see when they are nude is truth. They can't hide.' —Leduc

'WE'RE able to transcend function—but we don't necessarily understand—the body'



Leduc's *Amour* and Léveillé's *Amour*, while at first (apparently) both skirt the taboo of the way we perceive the body



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